

## Handicap Doesn't Discourage FFA Member

**Dustin Banks** suffered severe head trauma as a toddler, leaving him with definite learning disabilities. At age 9, Dustin found involvement in his local 4-H Club and when he entered high school at North Gem High School in Bancroft, Idaho, he decided to become involved in **North Gem FFA Chapter**. Dustin's parents, John and Rhonda Banks, who own a farm 15 miles from Bancroft, said that the **FFA gave their son opportunities he would never have had as a special ed student**.

Dustin is a **2002 graduate** and is employed back on the family farm. Through his FFA experience he learned to care for cattle, showed animals at the local fair and actually began a herd of his own – 15 cow/calf pairs. In the summer, Dustin moves sprinkler pipe on the farm where barley, wheat and alfalfa are raised. Dustin is unable to get a driver's license but is able to operate four-wheelers and other vehicles on the family farm.

**Dustin's parents feel that the FFA helped their son develop a broad array of social skills.** A highlight for Dustin was a trip his junior year to the National FFA Convention in Kentucky. Dustin's father said, *"our son is like a community icon, he was a token player on the high school basketball team and everyone cheered when Dustin got time on the floor."* His father concluded, *"the FFA afforded our son opportunities that most special need kids don't get in high school – we are thankful for the local agriculture science teacher and a program like FFA that gave Dustin reason to go to school each day."* Dustin serviced as a Chapter officer for his junior and senior year.

---

If you need further information about the FFA in Idaho, please contact  
Rick Waitley, Executive Director, Idaho FFA Foundation, 55 SW 5th Ave #100, Meridian ID 83642 – ph: 208-888-0988.

*FFA – Developing Premier Leadership, Personal Growth, Career Success  
Through Agricultural Education*